CHARIS YOUTH

Series: Life Lessons From Jesus

Lesson 2: The Parable of the Sower

About This Lesson

God's Word is a living and powerful seed that is incorruptible! The power of the Word depends on the person receiving it and how they respond to it. We all have the same Word of God sown into our lives, but we must receive and speak the Word. The principles from the Parable of the Sower are the keys to understanding the other parables.

Key Takeaway: Let God's Word take root in your heart. The harvest does not depend on the seed. It depends on the soil. It depends on the conditions of the heart. The problem is never with the seed of God's Word!

Key Verse: Matthew 13:23 But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

Teaching Outline:

I. GOD'S WORD AND YOU

A. Your heart needs to have the right attitude towards God's Word.
Proverbs 4:20–24 *My son, give attention to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. [21] Do not let them depart from your eyes; keep them in the midst of your heart; [22] for they are life to those who find them, and health to all their flesh. [23] Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life. [24] Put away from you a deceitful mouth, and put perverse lips far from you.*

B. Your mouth needs to speak God's Word!
Matthew 12:34 … *For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.*

C. Your attitude towards God's Word will be reflected in the words you speak, and in the actions you take.
Hebrews 4:12 *For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

II. THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER (MATTHEW 13:1-9)

A. This is one of 8 major parables of the kingdom of God. Its central message is that the gospel of the kingdom will meet with varying levels of success in the human heart.
   1. The seed is the CONSTANT.
   2. The heart is the VARIABLE.

B. About one-third of Jesus' teaching was in parables, which are brief stories from everyday life told by analogy to illustrate spiritual truths. Sometimes parables are so simple that people miss the point.
   1. God continues to speak in parables.

III. THE PURPOSE OF JESUS'S PARABLES (MATTHEW 13:10-17)

A. This is the parable to understand all parables! Mark 4:13 …Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all parables?

B. As believers, we have been given divine insight into these mysteries (verse 11).

C. If you open your heart to God, He will speak to you. He will pour into your life with great abundance (verse 12).

D. We need to have ears to hear, be teachable, and trust God more than we trust ourselves or others (verses 13–14).

E. The hearts have grown dull, a gradual change of heart over a period of time that didn't happen overnight (verse 15).

F. If you want God's Word to change your life, you must have open eyes, listening ears, and a heart for God (verse 16).

G. Many have desired to have what we have! We have the words of the Messiah. We have the witness of God's walk on the earth (verse 17).

III. THE EXPLANATION OF THE FOUR TYPES OF SOIL (MATTHEW 13:18-23)

A. The Wayside (verse 19)
   1. It's important to understand God's Word, and we need to dig a little deeper into it!

   2. Don't just go through the motions! Seek to understand. Worship with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength!

   3. The difference between knowledge, understanding, and wisdom.
      a. Knowledge answers "What"– honor your father and mother.
      b. Understanding answers "Why"– that it may be well with you and have a long life.
      c. Wisdom answers "How" – go beyond respect, find a need, and meet it in a grand way.

   4. Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts.
      a. The Word is supposed to be believed and cause people to be saved!
      b. The devil doesn't want you to believe the Word!
      c. Don't be ignorant of His devices! He is the one who condemns and accuses us. He is the father of lies. He is a deceiver!

B. Stony Ground (verses 20–21)
   1. The Word is received, but trials cause it to fall away because it didn't grow roots.

   2. When you believe God's Word, you might go through an initial test. The test isn't from God. Keep standing on the promise!
      a. Let the test become a testimony!

   3. Believers need maturity! Don't get offended so easily! Don't be prideful!
      a. Let's all grow up together! Let's all serve God together!

4. Build a root system! Four things every believer needs according to Acts 2:42:
    a. Church
    b. Word
    c. Godly relationships
    d. Prayer (personal relationship with God)

5. You need endurance! The Christian walk is not a sprint, it's a marathon! Hebrews 10:35–36 *Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. [36] For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise.*

C. Thorns (verse 22)
1. Cares of the world and other desires choked the Word. Jesus needs to be your treasure!
   Matthew 6:21 *For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

2. Jesus needs to be our delight!
   Psalm 37:4 *Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.*

3. True pleasure comes from God!
   Psalm 16:11 *You will show me the path of life; in your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*

4. Look at the fruit! God wants us to produce mature fruit!

D. Good Ground (verse 23)
1. Have a noble and good heart that is focused on the Lord!

2. God looks at the heart!
   2 Chronicles 16:9 *For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.*

3. Hear and understand the Word so that you can bear an abundance of fruit!

Bottom Line:

God's Word is quick and powerful! It is incorruptible. Keep your heart on fire for Jesus and His Word! Receive the Word, and it will produce lasting fruit in your lives and pour out onto people around you!

Small Group Time:

1. Jesus used parables to teach truths in a way people could understand, but people struggled to understand spiritual things because their hearts weren't good soil. The more people heard the truth of the Word, the more they could start to understand. Even the disciples struggled to understand what Jesus taught, but they had faith and trusted Him even when things didn't make sense.

- What about the Bible do you struggle to understand? How can you get more understanding on that topic?
- If you were going to make a simple analogy for teens showing the importance of receiving God's Word and applying it to your life for success, how would you explain it?

2. The four types of soil (hearts) were: the wayside, stony ground, thorns, and good ground. Seeds were sown into each type of ground because God wants His Word to reach everyone where they are at now. Just because you have one type of soil (heart) now, doesn't mean you will stay that way.

- Why do you think Satan tries so hard to stop the Word from taking root in you? (If you really understand the power that God gives you and use it, Satan is powerless, and you can do mighty things for the kingdom of God.)
- What trials and cares have been trying to steal the Word from you, and how can you stop that?
- How can you keep your heart on good ground?

Declaration:

"I receive the Word of God, and it works in me. I am good soil. I will have good fruit coming from the Word at work in me."

Youth Weekly Journal:

Handout, Email, or Download

- **Question:** What fruit are you showing that exposes what type of soil you are?
- **Pray:** Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the truth of the Word as you read it so you will understand and receive it.
- **Read:** Compare the three versions of the Parable of the Sower and the Seed is found in three places: Matthew 13:1–23, Mark 4:1–20, and Luke 8:1–15. List out the similarities and differences, and write down new revelations that the Holy Spirit gives you.
- **Live It:** Choose a verse to memorize this week that has spoken to you or has truth that you want to live this week. Each day do a soil sample test and see if your life matches what the Word says. Don't feel condemned, just ask the Holy Spirit to help you match the Word and produce fruit.
- **Create:** Make a visual prayer target that has the four types of soil: wayside, stony ground, thorns, and good ground. Write down someone you know who seems to be that type of soil and pray for each one to receive and let the Word do its work in them.

EXTENDING THE LESSON

Icebreaker Question: If you were a farmer, what crop would you grow, and why?

Opening Activity Suggestion: Look online for some fun and unusual facts about seeds and soil. Write down facts and made-up facts. Read them and have the youth decide if it is true or made up.

Opening Affirmation: "I love the Word of God because it speaks to me about my situation. I will understand Jesus' parables and apply them to my life."

Giving Time: Deuteronomy 8:18 *And you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day.*

We are told to remember the things God has given us. We have things because of His blessings on us. He gives us the power to make wealth, including our

abilities and imagination to create ideas that bring wealth. When we give, we are honoring and thanking Him for His blessings.

BEYOND –
ADDITIONAL APPLICATION FOR CHURCH OR HOME

Challenge: This week's challenge is for the young people to keep track of the seeds from the Word of God that are being sown in them. For example, each time they hear or read a verse, they should write down what truth God is saying to them and how it applies to their lives. Next week, ask volunteers to share one of the seeds that they allowed to take root in their lives.

Biblical Worldview: Many young people feel entitled and that they should be given advantages and rewards without putting in work or effort. Youth who want to live a biblical worldview will respond differently based on the Parable of the Sower. They realize that their heart is the soil, and it can allow seeds of God's truth to grow and bear good fruit. Their role is to seek understanding from the Holy Spirit, receive the seed, speak the truth, and watch that seed take root and grow!

Outreach/Missions: Missionaries definitely have experience trying to cultivate and fertilize soil that is by the wayside, stony, and thorny. It can be very discouraging for missionaries who work with people who aren't receptive. Pray for the missionaries to have encouragement and perseverance to bring them to a time when they see a harvest from the seeds they plant.